## EXHIBIT LIST

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Petitioner: Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts  
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Dear Sue

HIGH SPEED RAIL (WEST MIDLANDS – CREWE) BILL – HOUSE OF COMMONS SELECT COMMITTEE:
PETITION HS2-P2A-000180 – THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF WILDLIFE TRUSTS ('THE RSWT')

I am writing to you in my capacity as the Director of Hybrid Bill Delivery at HS2 Ltd, which is acting on behalf of the Promoter of the High Speed Rail (West Midlands-Crewe) Bill (the Bill) currently before Parliament. I understand that the RSWT have a number of concerns about the impact of Phase 2A of HS2 (known as 'the Proposed Scheme') and have submitted a petition on that basis against the Bill in the House of Commons.

Following discussion of your petition with my colleagues, I am writing to set out our position in relation to the issues raised and the measures identified to address your concerns.

No Net Loss (NNL)

At the meeting on 22 June I understand that you said that the RSWT would welcome the Promoter giving a similar assurance to that given for HS2 Phase 1 (U&A Reference 2546) relating to the objective outlined in HS2 Phase 2A Information Paper E2: Ecology of seeking to achieve no net loss in biodiversity at a route-wide level (the 'No Net Loss' objective). We understand that this would provide comfort to the RSWT that we are fully committed to the No Net Loss objective and so, in recognition of this, I am writing, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport, to offer the RSWT the following assurance:

"In this assurance:

"The Bill" means the High Speed Rail (West Midlands - Crewe) Bill as originally introduced into the House of Commons on 17 July 2017;

"Ecological Review Group" means a group comprising organisations whose purpose is to ensure that ecological mitigation measures meet the objectives set out in Information Papers and policies relating to the delivery of the Proposed Scheme;

"Natural England" means the government’s adviser for the natural environment in England;

"Nominated Undertaker" means a person nominated in an order made under clause 41 of the Bill and, in the period prior to Royal Assent, High Speed Two (HS2) Limited;
"Project Objective" means the objective for the Proposed Scheme in relation to seeking no net loss to biodiversity;

"Proposed Scheme" means the construction of Phase 2a of the High Speed Two railway network as authorised by the Bill in the form enacted.

1. The Secretary of State will require the Nominated Undertaker to commit to fulfilling, so far as reasonably practicable, the Project Objective, and will do this through adopting appropriate means to include:

   i. to monitor and report against the no net loss calculation during the construction of the Proposed Scheme and to liaise with Natural England in this regard;
   ii. to propose and/or create, so far as reasonably practicable and appropriate, habitats, either as an alternative means of providing habitat to those areas identified in the Bill or as a means of providing additional mitigation reasonably required to fulfil the Project Objective;
   iii. to seek and have due regard to reasonable and appropriate proposals from members of the Ecological Review Group and other appropriate organisations or stakeholders, for the provision of specific locations for off-site habitat enhancement; and,
   iv. to seek and have due regard to reasonable and appropriate proposals from members of the Ecological Review Group and other appropriate organisations or stakeholders, for the provision of specific locations for off-site habitat creation.

2. Paragraphs iii and iv above are subject to the following conditions:

   (a) the Nominated Undertaker being satisfied that the additional habitat creation or habitat enhancement can be delivered without giving rise to any new or different significant environmental effects from those assessed in the Environmental Statement deposited with the Bill;
   (b) the Nominated Undertaker securing any and all necessary consents and agreements for delivering and maintaining the additional habitat creation or habitat enhancement; and
   (c) the Nominated Undertaker being of the view that the additional habitat creation or habitat enhancement can be delivered without prejudicing the safe, timely and economic delivery of the Proposed Scheme.”

The Nominated Undertaker may be HS2 Ltd, or it may be another body or bodies appointed to oversee the construction and operation of Phase 2A.

If accepted, the assurance set out above will be included in the Register of Undertakings and Assurances, which is held by the Department for Transport. Drafts of the Register will be published regularly during the passage of the Bill and it will be finalised after Royal Assent. A Nominated Undertaker will be contractually obliged to comply with all relevant undertakings and assurances set out in the Register. Further information on how the Secretary of State will ensure compliance with assurances made by HS2 Ltd is set out in HS2 Phase 2A Information Paper B5, Compliance with Undertakings and Assurances.

I hope that the information set out above gives you the comfort required on this issue.

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1 A copy can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/understanding-the-hybrid-bill-hs2-phase-2a-information-papers
Voluntary measures for further ecological mitigation

The RSWT has referenced the aspiration in the recently published Government report “A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment” (‘the 25-year Plan’) concerning an ‘environmental net gain’ principle for development including housing and infrastructure. The RSWT has suggested that, rather than seeking to achieve net gain through the compulsory acquisition of additional land, the Promoter should seek voluntary measures with landowners to create further ecological mitigation.

In our Promoter’s Response Document we noted the ambition set out in the 25-year Plan, that the ambition remains at an early stage and that we would be discussing this with Defra and other relevant parties in due course. We also set out our concern that aiming to achieve net gain from the offsetting metric would be likely to lead to further third party land take, as we would seek to use Bill powers to secure its policy objective. We remain concerned that aiming for such a policy objective through voluntary arrangements alone would not provide sufficient security that the objective would be achieved.

Nonetheless the Promoter supports the RSWT’s contention that voluntary arrangements could be sought with local landowners in order to facilitate further ecological enhancement. In January 2018 the Promoter confirmed that an extra £5 million would be made available for the Community and Environment Fund (CEF) and Business and Local Economy Fund (BLEF); the CEF supports landscape and nature conservation enhancement projects which increase biodiversity. The Promoter has also recently announced an additional £2 million for the HS2 Woodland Fund. This fund will be designed to help support the creation of native woodland and restore existing ancient woodland sites between the West Midlands and Crewe. This will provide opportunities for landowners, communities and groups to apply for funding to implement ecological projects on a voluntary basis.

If you have any queries please don’t hesitate to contact Amber Corfield-Moore, Petition Manager, on 020 7944 8683 and amber.corfield-moore@HS2.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Oliver Bayne
Director, Hybrid Bill Delivery
High Speed Two (HS2) Limited